



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

January 13, 2010

Office of Governor Jim Doyle
115 East State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Doyle:

We wanted to take this opportunity to voice our most urgent concerns regarding your early release program for inmates that could lead to the accelerated release of as many as 3,000 convicted felons over the next two years. In the interest of public safety and in light of the suspension of a similar program in Illinois, we are respectfully asking you to consider an immediate repeal of the early release program.

Given the recent news that Illinois has chosen to suspend a similar program due to high rates of recidivism and the risk these newly released offenders pose to public safety, we are again asking that your administration's early release program be repealed or at the very least suspended pending a full review by the criminal justice committees of both houses.

As you know, during the budget process, we attempted to amend this budget provision and create a program that was safer and better suited for Wisconsin. Instead, our efforts were rejected, often by the slimmest of margins. We are seeing the results of those votes coming to fruition this week.

Chief among our concerns is the threat this program poses for compromising public safety. Out of the 21 offenders who were released this week, many of them have a history of serious felony convictions. Most could be classified as career criminals who have been in and out of the corrections system their entire life.

One of the inmates released this week has been convicted of drunken driving **five** times. In December, the legislature passed, and you signed, historic legislation to curb drunk driving in Wisconsin. One of the provisions in that bill makes fourth time drunken driving a felony offense. Letting a five time drunk driver walk out of jail early is a total betrayal of this bipartisan policy that you signed into law just last month.

You were quoted in the *Appleton Post Crescent* in December saying: ***"The only safe way with repeat drunk drivers, to keep them from harming people, is to lock them up," Doyle said. "The fact that this is a felony and there will be longer sentences for those repeat offenders I think will protect us."*** We couldn't agree with that statement more and that is why we are strongly urging you to suspend the early release program that has already allowed a five-time drunk driver to walk free.

Furthermore, the fact that this program does not rely on judges, prosecutors, or law enforcement to determine whether these inmates are safe for release makes it even more likely that new crimes will be committed.

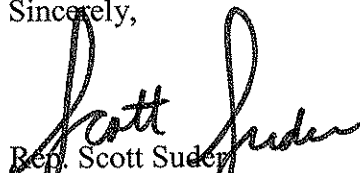
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Also, communities are not being notified when these felons are being released. The victims of these crimes and the people that are going to call these felons neighbors have the right to know they have been released from prison and what crimes they committed. We ask that at the very least a notification process be put in place immediately to provide this critical information to the public.

Finally, the number one argument made in support of this program was the cost savings needed to balance the state budget. We feel that the reported \$27 million in savings is dubious at best. The Legislative Fiscal Bureau has yet to confirm this number and many estimates place the cost savings of this program much lower. Since the savings that were promised cannot be confirmed, we feel that it is extremely irresponsible for your administration to rush ahead with this program without giving it the full consideration it deserves.

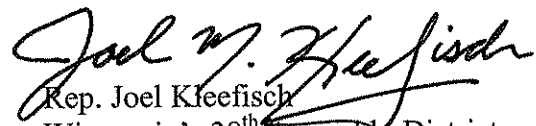
As public officials, we feel that it should be a top priority to ensure the safety of our citizens. The early release program, especially in its current form, does not meet this goal and is a detriment to the State of Wisconsin and safety of its citizens. We respectfully ask that it be repealed immediately.

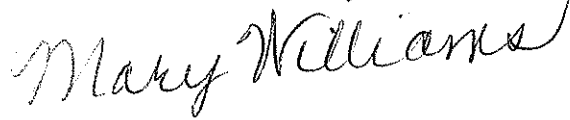
Sincerely,

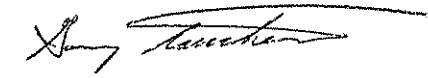

Rep. Scott Suder
Wisconsin's 69th Assembly District

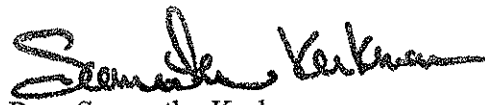

Rep. Phil Montgomery
Wisconsin's 4th Assembly District



Rep. Jeff Fitzgerald
Wisconsin's 39th Assembly District

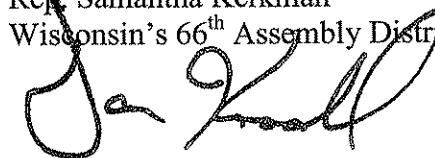

Rep. Joel Kleefisch
Wisconsin's 38th Assembly District

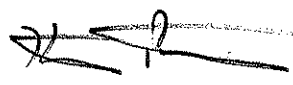

Rep. Mary Williams
Wisconsin's 87th Assembly District

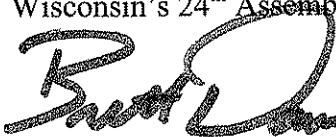

Rep. Gary Tauchen
Wisconsin's 6th Assembly District

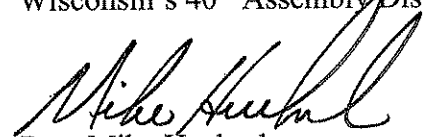

Rep. Samantha Kerkman
Wisconsin's 66th Assembly District

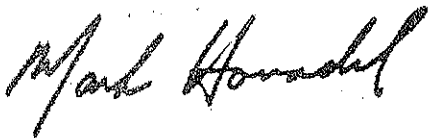

Rep. Leah Vukmir
Wisconsin's 14th Assembly District


Rep. Dan Knodl
Wisconsin's 24th Assembly District

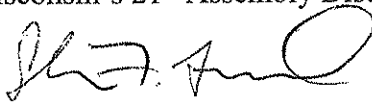

Rep. Kevin Petersen
Wisconsin's 40th Assembly District


Rep. Brett Davis
Wisconsin's 80th Assembly District


Rep. Mike Huebsch
Wisconsin's 94th Assembly District



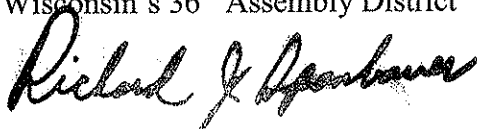
Rep. Mark Honadel
Wisconsin's 21st Assembly District



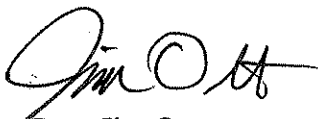
Rep. John Townsend
Wisconsin's 52nd Assembly District



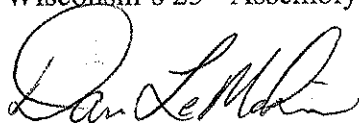
Rep. Jeff Mursau
Wisconsin's 36th Assembly District



Rep. Dick Spanbauer
Wisconsin's 53rd Assembly District



Rep. Jim Ott
Wisconsin's 23rd Assembly District



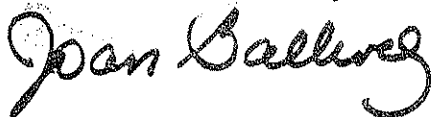
Rep. Dan LeMahieu
Wisconsin's 59th Assembly District



Rep. Tom Lothian
Wisconsin's 32nd Assembly District



Rep. Keith Ripp
Wisconsin's 47th Assembly District



Rep. Joan Ballweg
Wisconsin's 41st Assembly District



Rep. Scott Newcomer
Wisconsin's 33rd Assembly District



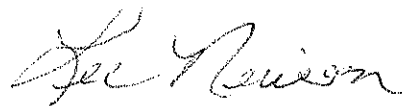
Rep. Don Pridemore
Wisconsin's 99th Assembly District



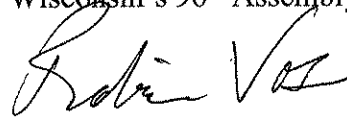
Rep. Scott Gunderson
Wisconsin's 83rd Assembly District



Rep. Kitty Rhoades
Wisconsin's 30th Assembly District




Rep. Lee Nerison
Wisconsin's 96th Assembly District



Rep. Robin Vos
Wisconsin's 63rd Assembly District



Rep. Mark Gundrum
Wisconsin's 84th Assembly District



Rep. John Murtha
Wisconsin's 29 Assembly District



Rep. Pat Strachota
Wisconsin's 58th Assembly District



Rep. Ed Brooks
Wisconsin's 50th Assembly District



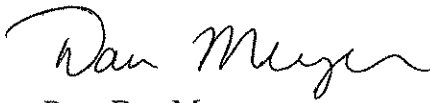
Rep. Rich Zipperer
Wisconsin's 98th Assembly District



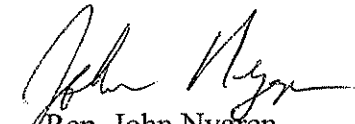
Rep. Roger Roth
Wisconsin's 56th Assembly District



Rep. Jeff Stone
Wisconsin's 82nd Assembly District



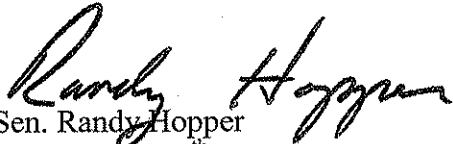
Rep. Dan Meyer
Wisconsin's 34th Assembly District



Rep. John Nygren
Wisconsin's 89th Assembly District



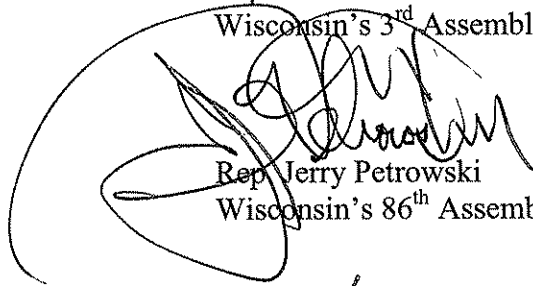
Sen. Neal Kédzie
Wisconsin's 11th Senate District



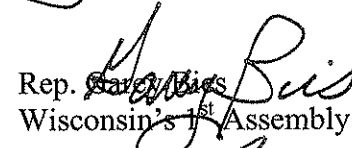
Sen. Randy Hopper
Wisconsin's 18th Senate District



Rep. Al Ott
Wisconsin's 3rd Assembly District



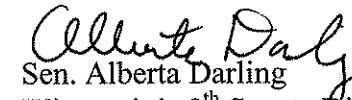
Rep. Jerry Petrowski
Wisconsin's 86th Assembly District



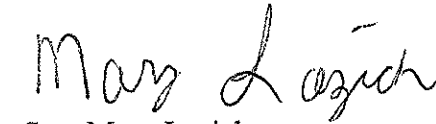
Rep. Gary Bus
Wisconsin's 1st Assembly District



Rep. Bill Kramer
Wisconsin's 97th Assembly District



Sen. Alberta Darling
Wisconsin's 8th Senate District



Sen. Mary Lazich
Wisconsin's 28th Senate District